

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and Members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 248.

My wife Gretchen and I are farmers in Cincinnati, and, as we both work for different farms, we met through our jobs. I manage a cooperative farm growing produce and raising cows and Gretchen manages the market for an educational farm raising vegetables and livestock. Recently, Gretchen's boss announced that he will be instating mandatory COVID vaccines for all employees. This is an issue for us because of our beliefs about health and a history of suspected vaccine injury. Gretchen's boss will make her choose between her values or her job, where she has been employed for nearly 10 years. This is wrong because it is her right to choose what she puts into her body.

Gretchen and I have a 2 year old and another one on the way, and she would lose her job if she chooses not to get the vaccine. This would put an undue financial burden on our family considering my farm cooperative continues to struggle to make ends meet.

We also believe that each person reacts differently to vaccines as do each of us to any prescription drug. We believe that I experienced severe reactions to my childhood vaccines, which adversely affect me to this day. Just like it would be wrong to make someone eat peanuts when they have experienced allergic reactions to them, it is also wrong to force someone to inject a vaccine that they suspect could cause severe injury. Vaccines are not a "one size fits all" solution. Therefore, exemptions are necessary and right.

Thank you again for allowing my testimony and for making bill 248 a priority.

Sincerely,
Stephen Dienger